



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

A MEMORABLE FESTIVAL FOR ALL!

SAINT-BONIFACE, February 27, 2017 – After 10 days of programming and a few days of challenging weather, the 48th edition of Festival du Voyageur turned out to be, once again, a great success with over **94 000 visits** to all the official festival sites. Due to abnormally warm weather conditions, the programming at the Rendez-vous on Ice (on the Red River Mutual Trail) was significantly reduced resulting in a decrease in overall participation by approximately 4%. However, a large number of visitors were able to enjoy the festivities and celebrated the “joie de vivre” at the winter festival!

Festival du Voyageur’s Executive Director, Ginette Lavack Walters, is proud of the latest edition and its celebrations: “A big thank you to all the HéHo Heroes from near and far who came to celebrate with us! You helped make the 48th edition of the Festival du Voyageur a great success! Of course, abnormally warm weather conditions did present certain challenges, but resulted in very large crowds over the weekend at Voyageur Park. Also, festivalgoers were thrilled with the world class and diverse programming offered this year, which is music to our ears! Thank you again and we can’t wait to see you next year!”

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

A plethora of events, workshops and concerts were presented during Festival du Voyageur 2017 and many of them were great successes. This winter, Festival du Voyageur offered many **special events** for its patrons, amongst the most popular we should mention the **Martin Sexton concert** at the Voyageur Trading Post, **Fashion on Ice** which was relocated to the Forks and the **Rendez-vous des chefs**, our annual pea soup competition in Maison du Bourgeois. Also very popular this year was the new **Wood Carving Challenge** presented by the Winnipeg River Chainsaw Carving Association (WRCCA), which generated a lot of enthusiasm amongst the festivalgoers! The auctions for the sculptures raised over \$20,000 which will be divided between the sculptors, the WRCCA and to cover the event costs.

Historical interpretation inside **Fort Gibraltar** once again took visitors back in time to the fur trade era for the duration of the festival. On the second floor of the Maison du Bourgeois, the **Voyageur Apprenticeship Workshops** were back for a third straight year and were just as popular as last year. They offered visitors a chance to take in traditional demonstrations and participate in workshops touching on a variety of subjects, including wood carving, hide tanning and Métis beading. The **lunches and dinners in Fort Gibraltar’s Maison du Bourgeois** offered by Festival du Voyageur and Gibraltar Dining Corporation were also a hit. Finally, with the help of over 150 photos submitted by Festival du Voyageur social media followers, a **Giant Tommy Prince Mosaic** was created in honour of this great Manitoban who distinguished himself on the battlefield and was an advocate for improving First Nations living conditions.

The **musical programming** once again took centre stage at Festival du Voyageur. In all, **more than 150 artists** were in concert at Voyageur Park as well as in our Official Sites during the 10 days of the festival.

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Among the most popular acts we can list **L'Angélus, Wide Mouth Mason, Monophonics, Attica Riots, Alfa Rococo** and much more. Many artists representing a variety of genres played to jam-packed crowds.

THE WINNERS

The Beard Growing Contest was once again one of the winter festival's most popular activities. Taking place in the Université de Saint-Boniface Portage Tent, the contest featured **26 contestants** who competed in five different categories: the Festival Beard (contestants shaved on December 15 and grew their beards until February 17), the Voyageur Beard (wild and wooly), the Novelty Beard (groomed mustache or beard), the Open category (homemade beards) and the Frosty Beard Face category (Instagram contest). The winners were Colin Ward in the **Festival Beard** category, Sean Stacey in the **Voyageur Beard** category, Derek Lahey in the **Novelty** category, Jaclyn Bell in the **Open** category and Stéphanie Demers in the **Frosty Beard Face** category. The Beard Growing Contest also raised \$1,100 for the **Heart and Stroke Foundation**. As for the **Rendez-vous des chefs**, our very popular pea soup competition, the people's choice award went to **Clementine** and the judges' prize was awarded to **The Mitchell Block**.

The winners of the **Fiddling Contest** were: in the under 7 category, Mary McCusker; in the 8-10 years old category, Shilo Hiebert; in the 11-13 years old category, Malacai Hiebert; Timmy Veldhuis in the 14-17 years old category; in the 60+ category, Brian Granger; and in the open championship category, Michael Audette. As for the **Jigging Contest** the winners were: in the 9 years old and under competition, Piper Bresser; in the 10-13 years old category, Clarissa Spence; in the 60+ category, Verna Spence; and in the open championship category, Felicia Morisseau.

A survey is currently available on the Festival du Voyageur website at www.heho.ca to gather visitors' feedback and comments on this 48th edition. Respondents are eligible to win a Winnipeg Staycation Package including 4 tickets to KURIOS by Cirque du Soleil, under the Big Top at Sterling Lyon Parkway & Kenaston Blvd., and a 1 night stay at the Fairmont Winnipeg OR a \$300 package for Thermëa Winnipeg spa! The deadline to participate is March 3.

Festival du Voyageur's staff would like to thank its volunteers, sponsors, partners and many visitors who contributed to the resounding success of the 2017 edition of Festival du Voyageur. We hope to see you next year for the 48th edition of Festival du Voyageur from **February 16 to 25, 2018**.

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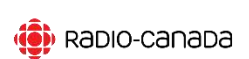
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